Grade Level: K-3

Ncss Curriculum Strands:

* Guide learners in the use of maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.
* Assist learners to analyze the spatial information about people, places, and environments on Earth’s surface.
* Help learners to understand the physical and human characteristics of places.

Introduction:

Internet map and direction databases as well as global positioning systems (GPS) have revolutionized the way people find locations, but they cannot replace the skill of reading and examining maps and globes. By studying and investigating types of maps, students can understand more about the economic, political and social features of a country, in addition to gaining geographical knowledge. The study of maps and globes also increases critical and abstract thinking skills that will help students as they progress in school. Map reading helps students improve problem-solving and reasoning skills. For example, students can calculate how far the library is from their school or house. They can also formulate the easiest and fastest routes to travel to favorite vacation spots. This can build students' self-sufficiency and confidence in their ability to formulate solutions. By studying a map, students can learn much about a country, including information about its land forms, bodies of water, natural resources and climate. A major part of geography concerns the technical aspects of map construction. Students will learn about the symbols and tools of maps, such as the compass rose, key and titles that help distinguish one map from another.

History:

Students get a strong sense of the history of a place by studying its maps. Maps have to be redrawn periodically to reflect changes that result from wars, politics and internal conflict. By studying old and new maps, students can see these transformations. For example, they can learn about U.S. history by studying maps from the colonial period to the post-Civil War era. Students can also see how Europe has changed several times during the last century as areas gained independence or became part of another country.

Relevance:

When students know how to read maps, they will be able to see the world in a new light. Maps provide much more than just a location. Map reading can give students a sense of perspective when they see that they are part of a larger world, which could instill a desire to learn more about the places on a map than just their names.

Application and ideas:

Students can reinforce writing skills by comparing features of various countries that they have learned from studying maps. They can also improve math skills by graphing average temperature and rainfall amounts from physical maps. Because there are many types of maps, students can learn to organize and classify data, which is a useful skill for any academic subject.

Procedures:

* Show a world map and globe and point out the seven continents, Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe and Australia. An interactive activity to help the children remember the names of the continents is to sing this song to the tune of "My Darling, Clementine".

"There is Africa, South America, North America is where we live.

Europe, Asia and Australia...Antarctica where penguins live."

* Since children love to sing and clap, this activity teaches social development and [elements of movement, such as rhythm](http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/12345.aspx) in the "The Continental Clap" with ideas found in the Core Knowledge Sequence program. This reinforces the names of the continents with another drill type song.

"The continents are seven lands. We'll say them as we clap our hands."

Africa...Af..ri..ca, where the elephants, giraffes, and lions live.

(As you call out the continents, the children will clap to the syllables of each .)

* Next we will, gather the children in a circle and toss an inflatable globe ball. As each child catches the "globe", he or she will say the name of one continent.

Extensions:

Associate something found on each continent that will help the child remember its location on the map or globe. Africa, is where the elephants, giraffes and lions live there. South America has tropical forests and one of the the longest rivers in the world, the Amazon River. North America is where we live. Europe and Asia is together on the map, but Australia is an island where the kangaroo and koala bear live. Antarctica is way down below, frozen and home to the penguins. For older students they can name a country on the continent, even a city on the continent.

Text Set:

*North America: True Books, Continents* by David Petersen

*The Seven Continents* by Wil Mara

*Welcome to North America!* by April Pulley Sayre

References and Resources:

<http://www.ehow.com/about_5398493_importance-using-maps-globes-schools.html>

<http://www.brighthubeducation.com/pre-k-and-k-lesson-plans/15607-continents-lesson-plan-and-activities/>

<http://www.kbears.com/continents.html>

<http://www.yourchildlearns.com/online-interactive-maps.htm>

<http://www.mrnussbaum.com/interactive_world_map.htm>

<http://www.yourchildlearns.com/map-puzzles.htm>

<http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/Geography.htm>